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PLAUTUS' *MERCATOR* 59 AND LAMBINUS' NOTE

Although the destructive part of my note in the preceding number (p. 81) may prove satisfactory, I am reminded by a kind suggestion from Professor Lindsay that on the constructive side I failed to do justice to a bit of interesting evidence. I was aware that Lambinus in his note remarks: "vetus unus codex in quo scriptum repperi *commilcutum*; alter in quo litteris obscuris *commulcium*," but I had not attached any significance to the remark in my ignorance of Cicero's *Epistulae ad Atticum* i. xiv. 5, to which Professor Lindsay calls my attention. The passage in Cicero, as usually edited, reads: "Hic tibi rostra Cato advolat, convicium Pisoni consuli mirificum facit, si id est convicium, vox plena gravitatis, plena auctoritatis, plena denique salutis." The MSS, however, as quoted in Purser's Oxford text, give in the first instance *commulticium* (M, with *convicium* in the margin), *commulcium* (Z), and in the second instance *commultium* (MZ). On this passage O. E. Schmidt (*Die handschr. Ueberlieferung d. Briefe Ciceros*, p. 347) mildly defends *commulticium* (with which he compares *multicius*, "vielgeschlagen") or *commulcium* (comparing *commulcare*) as "ein . . . Wort der Vulgärsprache, welches von Cicero hier in absichtlicher Derbheit statt des üblichen *convicium* angewendet ist, . . ." Cf. also Sjögren, *Comment. Tullianae* (1910), p. 56. Purser, though retaining *convicium*, completes the evidence by referring to Lambinus' note on our passage. It may be noted that the apologetic *si*-clause is even more in place if Cicero used *commulcium*, which Lambinus interprets in Plautus as "a black eye," hence "disgrace."

In view of this evidence I must say that *commulcium*, to which rather than to *commulticium* the evidence seems to me to point, may be worthy of more serious attention than *coniurium* in the verse of Plautus, to say nothing of Cicero. That such a bit of popular slang (cf. *commulcat* in the index of *Corpus Gloss. Lat.*, where *conturbare* and *complodere* are interpretative words) should have needed interpretation such as *convicium* supplies, and that this gloss should have been available to the Italian editors and has been corrupted to *convirium* and *coniurium* in the Palatine tradition, is certainly conceivable. Finally, that Lambinus may be offering *commulcium* from the Codex Turnebi will naturally occur to Professor Lindsay. Again, I may complete my Jeremiad on modern lexicography by expressing the wish that the *Thesaurus* will find a place for *commulcium* as it has not for *coniurium*; in this way, doubtless, many ghost-words would creep into our lexicons, but there are some very substantial ghosts lurking in the critical apparatus of many a classical author.

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